

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Propertyhistoric name John Johntz Houseother names/site number 041-0020-0006**2. Location**street & number 214 N. Walnut☐ not for publicationcity, town Abilene☐ vicinitystate Kansas code KScounty Dickinsoncode 041zip code 67410**3. Classification**

Ownership of Property

☒ private☐ public-local☐ public-State☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

☒ building(s)☐ district☐ site☐ structure☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1

Noncontributing

 buildings sites structures objects1 Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/ANumber of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 0**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Samuel Powers State Historic Preservation OfficerMay 9, 1991
Date

Signature of certifying official

Kansas State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.☐ See continuation sheet.☐ determined eligible for the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.☐ removed from the National Register.☐ other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian: Italian Villa

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone: limestone

walls Wood: weatherboard

roof Asphalt

other Metal: iron

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The John Johntz House (c. 1880-1881) is located at 214 N. Walnut in Abilene, Dickinson County, Kansas (pop. 6,572). The two-story, frame Italian Villa style house stands on a cut limestone foundation. Narrow clapboarding sheathes the house. The plan of the building is a modified "L-plan", truncated hipped roofs cover the main body of the house. A four-sided, three-story tower occupies the position where the primary wing joins the principal section of an "L-plan" house. A steeply pitched and slightly flared mansard roof concludes the tower. Metal roof cresting ornaments the all of the roof ridges.

The building maintains a high degree of architectural integrity although the original wooden shingle roof has been replaced with asphalt shingles, the porch roof's balustrade has been removed, and the multi-grey hued color scheme has been painted white. There are intermittent rot problems in the eaves caused by clogged gutters, but overall the building maintains a very high degree of structural integrity.

The building has an eastern facade orientation, with overall measurements of 33 feet from east to west and 58 feet from north to south, but it is really comprised of three separate, two-story units and a three-story tower. The facade orientation and the overall measurements of the house are somewhat deceiving, making it appear larger than it is from some vantage points and smaller than it is from other vantage points. The asymmetrical, modified "L-plan" of the house lends to the deception. Additionally, the secondary facade of the house fronts Third Street, which is the major through street in this residential neighborhood. The secondary facade provides a more visually appropriate street elevation than does the building's true facade, which fronts onto Third Street.

A narrow, one-story porch wraps around the north and east elevations, terminating at bay windows on each side. The porch is supported by paired and single, attenuated pillars. The corners of each pillar are chamfered, giving each pillar a rounded appearance. The pillars stand on simple, classically derived bases and are surmounted by four-sided capitals displaying applied or

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projecting quatrefoils on each face. Broken spandrel shaped members surmount each capital, supporting the porch's flat roof. Modillions articulate the porch's frieze. Lathe turned spindles and railings comprise the porch's balustrade. Two identical, five step stairways demarcated by wooden newel posts at grade provide access to the porch from the north and east sides, lending credence to the visual importance of the secondary facade.

A one-story porch of similar description is nestled against the southeastern wing of the eastern elevation, it has been screened. This porch connects with a nondescript one-story porch which spans the most southerly part of the southern elevation.

An elaborate entablature with brackets and projections decorates the eave line under all of the building's roofs, including the bay windows but excluding the porch. The scrolled brackets are paired in most cases and incised. Decorative panels articulate the entablature's frieze, a dentilled cornice surmounts the frieze. The tower's entablature displays no decorative frieze treatments, but is articulated by the paired scrolled brackets.

Fenestration on the house is comprised primarily of 1/1, rectangular, double hung sash. Visually prominent, second-story windows are paired. Projecting pediments surmount all windows with the exception of those in the two bays and the tower's third level.

A three-sided, one-story bay projects from the east and north elevations, flanking the building's primary porch. The eastern bay contains three, 1/1, rectangular, double hung windows. The northern bay contains four, 1/1, rectangular, double hung windows. Decorative panels underscore and surmount each window.

One arched, 1/1 double hung sash fenestrates each face of the tower's third level, surmounted by a stationary oculus window. The mansard roof is articulated on all four sides by truncated dormer projections, each containing an oculus window.

Primary access to the house is achieved through a transomed, double wooden door that pierces the tower's eastern wall. The front door leads into the building's compact hall. Each door is fenestrated with an arched window paned with leaded glass quarrels. Fluted Corinthian pilasters flank each window, supporting a flared, triangulated cornice. A recessed, square panel with a geometric center projection and incised corner blocks underscore each window.

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A floral motif is employed for the stained glass transom window that surmounts the doorway. A simple surround encases the doorway.

Secondary access to the house is achieved through the eastern elevation's rear screened-in porch and a door which leads into the kitchen.

A plain brick chimney rises from the eastern roof slope of the building's southern kitchen wing.

The building's interior displays an asymmetrical floorplan which is controlled by the tower. The tower contains the main entrance to the house, the compact front hall, and the tall and steep spiral staircase. Two doorways run off the hall, one leads west into the front parlour and the second leads south into the dining room. A rear parlour links the front parlour with the dining room, as it stands south of the front parlour and west of the dining room. The kitchen and pantry stand south of the dining room. A steep back staircase leads north to the second floor from the kitchen.

A small landing and a long, narrow hall with transomed doorways leading into various bedrooms defines the second floor. Their placement conforms with the floorplan on first floor, with two bedrooms on the west side, two rooms and the east side, and one room at the south end.

The staircase continues to the tower's third floor, terminating in a small room lit by eight windows.

The house retains much of its original woodwork, hardware, and fixtures. The front hall is floored with geometric parquetry. The breathtaking staircase displays the richly ornate carving of the High Victorian period and a period gas light for the newel post. The four-panel hinged and pocket doors in the two parlours and dining room are grained to resemble three different woods, the doors retain all of their original hardware. The front parlour and dining room display fenestrated bays which are articulated by arched mouldings that are compatible with the baseboard moulding. The three public rooms on the first level display coved ceilings and crystal chandeliers.

Some of the woodwork has been painted on the second and third floors, but the fixtures and other character defining elements are intact. A stained glass window with a floral motif illuminates the second floor landing.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☐ A ☒ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Period of Significance

1880-1881

1880-1909

Significant Dates

1880-1881

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person
Johntz, John

Architect/Builder
Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The John Johntz House (c. 1880-1881) is being nominated to the National Register under criteria B and C for its historical association with John Johntz (1840-1909), an Abilene businessman and civic leader, and for its architectural significance as an Italian Villa style residence. The house is one of several Italianate variants in Abilene, a community which boasts a very strong mix of architecturally intact residences from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The town of Abilene was platted in 1860 and incorporated in 1869. Between 1868 and 1872 Abilene was the center of the Texas cattle trade, after that the trade shifted west to Dodge City. By 1880 Abilene boasted a population of 2,360. The town boomed in 1887 with the arrival of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway lines, but the inflated land values began to fall the next year. By the mid-1890s Abilene had established a solid foundation for future and development.

It was with the expectation of success that John Johntz settled in Abilene in Fall, 1869. Johntz established a general merchandise store in 1870 under the name of Johntz Brothers. Johntz was born in Tuscarawas County, Ohio in 1840. He married Hettie Lebold of the same county in 1870.

With A.W. Rice, Johntz established the First National Bank of Abilene in June, 1879. Johntz served as president until 1889, when the bank closed. In 1885 Johntz became a partner in Malott and Company, which established the Citizens Bank of Abilene, now known as the Citizen's Bank and Trust Company, and Johntz's involvement with the bank continued until his death.

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Johntz established the Johntz and Rice Flour Mills with A.W. Rice in 1881. Johntz and Rice Flour Mills ran day and night for twenty years to supply the local and foreign markets with flour. Until the company was purchased by the Security Milling Company in 1901, it was the largest mill in Abilene. Johntz also established the Rice, Johntz and Nicolay Lumber and Milling Company with A.W. Rice in the 1880s. The company was destroyed in the 1903 flood. Johntz had interests in the Johntz Brothers, Gordon and Giles Elevators as well.

Johntz served the Abilene community as City Treasurer in 1881, as a one-term State Senator between 1882 and 1886, and as the President of the School Board in 1886.

Hettie Johntz was active with the Ladies Literary League, its first meeting was held in January, 1885 at the Johntz residence. The league was one of several ladies clubs that were established in Kansas that year, all sparked by the Junction City Ladies Reading Club, which was founded in 1884. The Ladies Literary League was active in civic affairs as well as literary analysis. In 1886 the club initiated efforts to establish a park for the city. In 1900 the league in conjunction with other ladies clubs helped to organize the Abilene Library Association. In 1920 the league lobbied for a milk testing ordinance. The Ladies Literary League joined the Kansas State Societal Sciences Federation, now called State Federation of Women's Clubs, in 1895.

John and Hettie Johntz lived in the Italian Villa residence at Third and Walnut from its completion in 1881 until their respective deaths in 1909 and 1934. The house was purchased by Sam Heller sometime after Mrs. Johntz's death for his residence. Heller was a close friend of President Dwight D. Eisenhower and it is said that the decision to run for the presidency was made in Heller's back yard. The property was purchased by Kenneth and Margery Olson in the 1960s and remains in this family.

Since Johntz established the Rice, Johntz and Nicolay Lumber and Milling Company in the 1880s, it is likely that his residence at 214 N. Walnut was built in part as a marketing tool to show what his lumber and milling company could build. Clear attribution of an architect or builder has not been established yet.

"The outstanding feature of the Italian Villa style is the combination of the tall tower with a two-story "L" or "T" shaped floorplan. The roof with projecting eaves has a gentle pitch

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resembling the pediment shape of classical temples. Other distinctive features are the grouping of either straight or round-headed windows into threes or small arcades, and the placement of porches or arcaded loggias between the tower and house or at the corners....The overall composition is an asymmetrical balancing of classical forms intending a picturesque quality....The tower is the feature that distinguishes the villa from the larger body of Italianate house designs, many of which are otherwise quite similar." (Blumenson, p. 35, 1981)

"Only about 15 percent of Italianate houses have the square tower that is often considered to be characteristic of the Italian Villa. The tower is sometimes centered on the front facade or placed alongside it; more commonly, it occupies the position where the wing joins the principal section of an L-plan house. Typically, such towers have narrow paired windows with arched tops. Tower roofs are most commonly low-pitched and hipped; occasionally, steep mansard roofs are used instead." (McAlester, p. 211, 1984)

The John Johntz House building integrates characteristics of the Italian Villa style in its wide eaves and gentle roof slopes, cross-hipped roof, mansard roofed tower, gracefully attenuated columns and brackets, and narrow floorplan. It expresses a pleasant vernacular interpretation of the high style in its desire to achieve the appearance of a northern facade while retaining the eastern entry.

The building maintains a high degree of architectural integrity although the original wooden shingle roof has been replaced with asphalt shingles, the porch roof's balustrade has been removed, and the multi-grey hued color scheme has been painted white. There are intermittent rot problems in the eaves caused by clogged gutters, but overall the building maintains a very high degree of structural integrity.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Andreas, A.T. History of the State of Kansas. (Chicago: Andreas, 1883).

Blumenson, John J.-G. Identifying American Architecture: A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, 1600-1945. (Nashville: AASLH, 1981).

Dickinson County Historical Society. A Gem: The City of the Plains, Abilene- The Centre of the Golden Belt. (Burlington, IA: DCHS, 1976).

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses. (New York: Knopf, 1984).

Scheele, Lynda. "John Johntz House." (National Register nomination draft, 1990).

☐ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings

Survey # _____

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering

Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State historic preservation office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

☐ University

☐ Other

Specify repository:

Kansas State Historical Society

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than 1 acre

UTM References

A

1	4	6	5	4	3	8	0	4	3	0	8	9	8	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located on Lots 72, 74, and 76 except west 15', Thompson and McCoy's Addition, Third Street, Abilene, Kansas. The property is bounded by Walnut Street to the east, Third Street to the north, and adjacent property lines to the west and south.

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all property historically associated with the house.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Martha Hagedorn-Krass, Architectural Historian

organization Kansas State Historical Society

date May 9, 1991

street & number 120 W. 10th

telephone 913-296-5264

city or town Topeka

state Kansas

zip code 66612



JOHN JOHNITZ
HOUSE
ABILENE, KS
ABILENE QUAD
14 654380
4308980